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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 398th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 5 July 1991, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. KALPAGE

(Sri Lanka)

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Implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/77 (continued)

- (a) Work on the substantive and organizational issues related to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in accordance with resolution 45/77

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/77 (A/AC.159/L.93 and L.110)
(continued)

- (a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE
CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 45/77

Item 11

1. Mr. JAIN (India), explaining his delegation's amendments to item 11 contained in document A/AC.159/L.110, said that the purpose of the first two amendments was to ensure that the language of the text was consistent with the language of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. He was proposing the deletion of the third subparagraph because the points therein were covered elsewhere in the text.

2. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that it was evident that military confrontation between the great Powers in the Indian Ocean region had waned considerably and was not the major threat to international peace and security there. Accordingly, she proposed to replace the first two subparagraphs with the following text:

"- Halting/non-pursuit of military and naval confrontation in the zone which are not in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations will contribute to the strengthening of regional and international peace and security.

"- Desist from military manoeuvres and other activities in the zone which are destabilizing, which undermine confidence and which could escalate rivalry and competition."

3. The third subparagraph should remain as it stood.

4. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that, once the Committee had completed its consideration of the items in document A/AC.159/L.93 and delegations had had the opportunity to consult with their Governments, it should proceed to a second reading of the full text and, it was to be hoped, finalize an agreed text.

5. His delegation could not endorse the insertion of the word "foreign" in the first two subparagraphs as suggested by the representative of India. However, it saw merit in the Australian representative's proposals.

6. He wished to propose the inclusion of a new subparagraph along the following lines:

(Mr. Mahmood, Pakistan)

"- Halting of military/naval competition and confrontation among States of the Indian Ocean region through, inter alia, resolution of outstanding disputes and differences and agreement on limits in their naval and other military forces to ensure equal and undiminished security of all littoral and hinterland States."

7. The CHAIRMAN said that in view of the varying degrees of agreement on various items in the document, delegations would be free to express their views following a second reading of the text.

8. Mr. MFULA (Zambia) agreed with the representative of Pakistan that delegations should have the opportunity during a second reading to discuss items on which agreement had not yet been reached.

9. Mr. JAIN (India) recalled that the Committee's mandate was to work towards the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace on the basis of the 1971 Declaration. While the Declaration drew inspiration from the United Nations Charter, it also elaborated on certain concepts which were directly relevant to the Committee's work. He urged the Committee not to lose sight of the concepts in the Declaration. His delegation's proposals reflected the language of the Declaration, and he could not accept any proposals that sought to dilute that language.

10. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that references to the United Nations Charter would not impinge on the 1971 Declaration.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that if agreement could not be reached on certain provisions at the current session, the Committee would have to transmit to the Conference a paper indicating the views of delegations on those provisions along with the agreed items.

12. Mr. CURE (Mauritius) said that the items in document A/AC.159/L.93 could be considered without calling the 1971 Declaration into question. He urged a flexible approach, since delegations wished to reflect further on the language used.

13. The amendments proposed by the Australian delegation were helpful.

14. Mr. JAIN (India) said that, since delegations had to consult further with their Governments, time should be allowed the following week for consideration of the item under discussion, and it was to be hoped that an agreement could be reached on the text.

15. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the first subparagraph of item 11 should be deleted, in view of the changes that had occurred in the international environment in recent years. Great-Power confrontation was not as important as other issues in the region. The second subparagraph could be moved, perhaps to item 17.

/...

Item 12

16. Mr. JAIN (India) said that his delegation was proposing the deletion of item 12 for two reasons: firstly, because one of the concepts contained therein, which derived directly from the 1971 Declaration, was covered elsewhere in the text and, secondly, because the other concept was not derived from the Declaration and therefore detracted from the Committee's main task of preparing for the Conference.

17. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that a small minority in the Committee favoured an approach to the establishment of peace in the Indian Ocean region which focused solely on the responsibilities of States outside the region. However, the overwhelming majority of the members of the Committee appeared to believe that the commitment to peace should be undertaken by regional and extraregional countries alike.

18. His delegation could not accept the Indian delegation's amendments. Paragraph 12 should be strengthened with a reference to the importance of maintaining a balance of power at lower levels of defensive readiness and balancing the supply of weapons, particularly offensive weapons, in the region.

19. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that his delegation agreed with the representative of the Soviet Union. The establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace involved both extraregional Powers and regional States.

20. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) agreed with the representative of the Soviet Union that some of the elements under item 12 could be transferred to item 17, which dealt with the promotion of confidence-building measures. There was a great deal of redundancy in items 11 to 16, and he suggested that, instead of proceeding item by item, the Committee should discuss items 11 to 16 as a sort of package in order to determine whether there was a way to restructure them. Perhaps the Committee could hold informal consultations on those items.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee could proceed to an exchange of views on items 11 to 16, as proposed by the representative of Ethiopia.

22. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that she was not convinced that there was a great deal of redundancy in items 11 to 16. For example, items 11 and 12 dealt with two different concepts: the first dealt with great-Power military/naval confrontation, while the second dealt with halting and reversing the arms race. The concepts contained in items 14, 15 and 16 were also quite distinct. The Committee had spent years deciding which concepts were relevant to the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, and it should not be too hasty in tampering with the results of long and difficult negotiations.

23. Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the consideration of items 11 to 16 as a package might prove to be a tremendous burden on the Committee.

24. The objectives of item 12 were quite clear, and the deletion of that item would not serve the Committee's purpose. It was advisable not to alter the items as they appeared in document A/AC.159/L.93, and the Committee should consider them item by item.

25. Mr. JAIN (India) said that his delegation favoured the proposal made by the representative of Ethiopia. Items 11 to 17 should be taken up as a whole since they all were directly related to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which continued to be the "Bible" in the Committee's discussion of those items. It might be expedient to consider those items in informal consultations.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that there was a fundamental difference between those delegations that adhered to the "Bible" and those that did not. He would welcome informal consultations if they could result in a reconciliation of those two points of view and a consensus on how to deal with items 11 to 17. However, the main objective was to complete the Committee's preparatory work for the holding of the Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1992.

27. Mrs. MULAMULA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the Committee should not consider items 11 to 17 as a package since, whenever the Committee dealt with items that were directly related to the Declaration, it ran into difficulties. She did not see how the Committee would be able to proceed as long as delegations had different views regarding the use of the Declaration as the basis for the Committee's work.

28. Mr. CURE (Mauritius) said that the Committee would not make much progress in the consideration of items 11 to 17 if it did not adopt a very specific approach. The Declaration should serve as a guiding light for the work of the Committee which, however, should adopt a more flexible approach to the Declaration.

29. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that it seemed that countries from the Indian Ocean region were engaged in making proposals and counter-proposals, which distorted the items and jeopardized the holding of the Conference.

30. He proposed that items 11 to 17 should be subsumed under the heading "Promotion and adoption of effective measures of disarmament in the Zone within the overall goal of general and complete disarmament" and that the headings of items 11, 12 and 14 to 17 should appear as paragraphs (a) to (f), respectively, under that heading. The merit of that proposal was that the new arrangement avoided excessive detail.

31. Mr. JAIN (India) said that he had proposed that the second subparagraph of item 13 should be deleted because it detracted from the tenor of the item and its language was not in keeping with the language used by the General Assembly or in the Declaration.

32. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that, while some delegations referred to the 1971 Declaration as the Committee's "Bible", that "Bible" had been amended and revised over the years. In 1971, the zone of peace had been understood as referring only to the Indian Ocean and naval forces active in that region. Twelve years later, at the initiative of the non-aligned countries, the zone of peace had been reinterpreted to include land masses in and around the region. The first interpretation of the "Bible" had been narrow, while the second had been broad, and there was every reason to adopt the broad interpretation.

33. Mr. JAIN (India) said that the new paragraphs which his delegation was proposing derived directly from the 1971 Declaration. His country felt that, while the non-paper contained a number of valid concepts, they were not all relevant to the approach embodied in the Declaration.

34. India had no specific proposal with regard to item 14; the paragraph which had been suggested in lieu of item 10 could be combined with item 14, to form a new paragraph, and the paragraph which had been proposed in lieu of item 3 could become the second subparagraph of item 15.

35. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that the Committee's faith in the "Bible" was increasingly being shaken. He failed to see what purpose would be served by deleting the second subparagraph of item 13. As correctly noted by the Soviet representative, what had been envisaged in 1971 had been further discussed thereafter, in the light of subsequent developments.

36. The CHAIRMAN said there appeared to be a consensus that the second subparagraph of item 13 should be retained, possibly under item 10, as suggested by the Soviet representative.

37. Mr. JAIN (India) said that, as stated earlier, his delegation would prefer the paragraph to be deleted because it did not reflect the language of the Declaration. However, if it was a question of amending the text so as to bring it into line with the Declaration, his delegation would be able to modify its position. He suggested the following amendment: "The establishment of a zone of peace in an extensive geographical area in one region, such as the creation of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, could have a beneficial influence on the establishment of permanent universal peace and the eventual attainment of general and complete disarmament."

38. The CHAIRMAN said that the above proposal appeared to evade the crucial issue of regional arms control measures. He would appreciate knowing whether the Indian representative felt that regional arms control would not have a beneficial influence on general and complete disarmament, or whether those specific words had been avoided because they did not appear in the "Bible". Since countries were insisting that regional arms control measures were important not only in other zones of peace, but in the Indian Ocean in particular, he wondered whether the representative of India could accept that concept if it were couched in different language.

39. Mr. JAIN (India) said that it was not a question of evading any concept but rather of concentrating on the areas which the Committee was called upon to consider. The concept of regional arms control measures was not relevant to the Declaration or to the work of the Committee. The Committee could not take a position on every issue; it should be bound by the terms of its mandate. There was a distinction to be drawn between the Committee's deliberations and the questions to be discussed by the Conference. The Conference would be a ministerial meeting and the scope of its work would be different.

40. The CHAIRMAN said it was his understanding that the point of view expressed by the representative of India was not shared by other delegations. The Committee must then decide how to proceed; for example, it could submit, for consideration by the Conference, the substantive issues on which there was broad agreement, while allowing India - and other countries, including Pakistan and Australia - to express different views on the various items.

41. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) proposed that the following two subparagraphs should be added to item 14: "The prohibition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction from the Indian Ocean and the territory of its littoral and hinterland States" and "Arrangements to ensure a climate of security and peace in the Indian Ocean region, particularly procedures for peaceful settlement of disputes and agreed ratios between the armed forces of the littoral and hinterland States".

42. The CHAIRMAN said that the Conference would be attended by a large number of countries. It was important for delegations to formulate concepts in a manner which would be acceptable to all the participants and would facilitate subsequent discussion. Since most countries of the region did not have military forces, it was unclear how ratios could be worked out. The issue was important to Pakistan, but he doubted that any purpose would be served by including it in the preparatory work for the Conference.

43. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that the issue did not pertain solely to his country. He invited the Chairman to refer to the report of the 1979 Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, which contained the same elements.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the report of the Meeting was before him but he could not find the elements to which the previous speaker had referred.

45. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that item 14 dealt with very sensitive issues which had been at the heart of the differences within the Committee for the past 20 years. While the withdrawal of foreign bases from the Indian Ocean region was a concept to which many members of the Committee were understandably attached, it was not acceptable to those countries which owned or used the bases. If the Committee intended for those countries to participate in the Conference, it should refrain from prejudging the outcome of the discussion of that subject. In addition, it should be noted that, during the recent Gulf crisis, the Indian Ocean bases had played an essential role in moving the troops which had been sent to restore the independence of Kuwait as authorized by the relevant Security Council resolutions. In her view, therefore, the Committee should take a more enlightened approach to the question of foreign military bases in the region. Her delegation proposed that item 14 should be deleted.

46. The CHAIRMAN, referring to item 17, asked whether the Indian delegation was suggesting that it should be deleted altogether or moved to another part of the document.

47. Mr. JAIN (India) said he wished to make it clear that his delegation was not opposed to the promotion of confidence-building measures per se and had supported resolutions on that subject in various international forums. India had proposed the deletion of item 17 because, first, the concept which it reflected was not relevant to the Declaration, and secondly, it was loosely formulated and inconsistent with the language commonly used in that context in other forums.

48. The CHAIRMAN said there appeared to be a consensus that the item should be retained. The Indian delegation could express its disagreement with that view. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to approve item 17.

49. It was so decided.

50. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to approve items 18 and 19.

51. It was so decided.

52. The CHAIRMAN, referring to items 11 to 16, requested the delegations of Australia, Pakistan and Ethiopia to submit their proposed amendments in writing.

53. Mr. CURE (Mauritius), referring to item 14, suggested that the heading could be changed to read: "Relevance" or "Importance" "of foreign military/naval presence and bases to peace, security and stability within the framework of a zone of peace". The first paragraph could be changed to read: "Relevance" or "Importance" "of foreign military/naval presence and foreign military/naval bases within the framework of a zone of peace as an important aspect of achieving the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean and the furtherance of its objectives".

54. The CHAIRMAN requested the representative of Mauritius to submit his proposal in writing.

55. The Committee had achieved consensus, or near-consensus, on items 1, 2 - with the exception of the phrase "including maritime boundaries" - 3 to 9, 18 and 19. Differences remained with regard to item 10 - with India objecting to the deletion of the phrase "without military alliances" - 11 to 16, and 17, which India wished to see deleted.

56. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that agreement on the first 10 items had been reached ad referendum. Since then, his delegation had received explicit instructions with regard to those items and would circulate amendments for consideration by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.



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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 399th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 5 July 1991 at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. KALPAGE

(Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/77 (continued)

- (a) Work on the substantive and organizational issues related to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in accordance with resolution 45/77 (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/77 (continued)

(a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE
CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 45/77
(continued) (A/AC.159/L.93 and L.110)

1. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that his delegation wished to draw attention to a non-paper it had submitted since the previous meeting, comprising a list of basic principles governing the creation of the zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and a section on the promotion and adoption of effective measures. While the elements contained therein were not new, the Committee's work could be expedited by following a framework approach, leaving the Conference to flesh out the details.
2. The CHAIRMAN said that such an approach might indeed avoid the difficulties engendered by discussion of the non-paper submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group (A/AC.159/L.93, appendix) and the amendments proposed thereto by the delegation of India (A/AC.159/L.110).
3. Mr. SHOUKRY (Egypt) said that the non-paper submitted by the delegation of Ethiopia appeared to offer a way for the Committee to end the session on a note of consensus.
4. Mrs. MULAMULA (United Republic of Tanzania) welcomed the initiative by the representative of Ethiopia, and noted its similarity to document A/AC.159/L.85, considered by the Committee at earlier sessions.
5. Mr. JAIN (India) said that, while he appreciated the good intentions underlying its submission, consideration of the Ethiopian non-paper would be tantamount to setting aside the approach taken since 1988. In any event the non-paper seemed not to differ from document A/AC.159/L.85. He would need to seek instructions from his Government before proceeding further.
6. Mr. DZVAIRO (Zimbabwe) said that he saw much merit in the non-paper proposed by Ethiopia.
7. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the representative of Ethiopia for his initiative. Consideration of the non-paper would allow the Committee to reach a compromise.
8. Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation was prepared to work on the basis of the non-paper.
9. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that her delegation was also prepared to work on the basis of the non-paper if that would allow the Committee to finalize its work on the substantive issues and principles.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, while he did not object to further consideration of document A/AC.159/L.93, he wondered whether the Committee would be able to complete its work in a timely manner if it attempted to proceed on the basis of that document.

11. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that the elements contained in his delegation's non-paper were essentially the same as those in document A/AC.159/L.85, to which the delegation of India had agreed in the past. Document A/AC.159/L.93 was already bulky and, given the large number of amendments submitted by India and Pakistan in particular, it was becoming more and more difficult for the Committee to proceed on that basis. Nevertheless, he understood the need to seek instructions, and suggested that the Committee should defer its consideration of the non-paper to its next meeting to allow time for consultation.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the Ethiopian non-paper was simply a list of titles already accepted by delegations, including that of India, to be submitted to the Conference, which would then add the substance. It did not seem possible for the Committee to complete its work on the basis of document A/AC.159/L.93, and all delegations except for India seemed willing to accept the Ethiopian non-paper.

13. Mr. BANDARA (Sri Lanka) said that, since the Committee was clearly not able to move forward on the basis of document A/AC.159/L.93, his delegation saw no difficulty in using the Ethiopian non-paper as a basis for its work.

14. Mr. JAIN (India), speaking on a point of order, said that the Committee had been proceeding on a certain basis, and suddenly was faced with a new proposal which had created a new situation. He formally proposed that the meeting should be suspended for consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 4.50 p.m. and resumed at 5.10 p.m.

15. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia), supported by Mr. SOTIROV (Bulgaria), proposed, in accordance with rule 77 (b) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that the meeting should be adjourned and that consideration of the matter at issue should be deferred to the following meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.